

Recycling and Refuse Management Committee

Minutes from 5/15/08 meeting

Present: Meg Vickery, Chair; Susan Waite, DPW Liaison; Marianne Lorenzelli; Adrie Lester; Clare Bertrand; Lucy McMurrer; Cristie Kiley, UMass environmental activist; Sterling Bush, Transfer Station employee.

Approved minutes from 4/11/08 with no changes.

Updates:

Susan will be emailing or mailing her updates to RRMC members prior to future meetings to expedite meeting discussions.

School Food Service Provider

The new school food service provider, Whitson's has retained Rebecca Trietley and offered all lunchroom staff continued employment.

Trash-Free Lunch Day

Trash-Free Lunch Day was 4/18 and a large success. The influx of new elementary school principals could also increase its popularity for 2009. All four elem. schools participated and Wildwood saw a 90% decrease in its waste volume.

Earth Day

Meg, Marianne, and Pat all volunteered their time on Earth Day – thank you. Atkins, Big Y, and Ben & Jerry's all donated food or drinks. Wheat was planted in various places in Amherst, recycled bags were sewn at Wheatberry's, and there were over 50 respondents to the paper recycling survey at the DPW/RRMC booth. The speakers were not as well attended as Susan would've liked (beautiful weather = fewer people going inside, Ellen Story was sick) but that may improve next year. Next year Earth Day may again be paired up with Arbor Day, and perhaps the Sustainable Energy Fair. Overall it was positively received throughout the community.

Intermediate Processing Facility

The Intermediate Processing Facility (IPF) at UMass, citing worker issues, has cancelled both the free local, small business recycling and the Amherst haulers use of their facility. This could have large community ramifications.

Needle Disposal Program

Susan passed out a brochure detailing "Sharps," the needle program which purchases boxes for disposing of dirty needles. Letters/brochures will be sent to doctors' offices, pharmacies, health departments, and schools in the area about this.

Taste of Amherst

The weekend of June 13-15 will see the Taste of Amherst downtown once again. Susan would like us to have a recycling presence there and RRMC members may need to volunteer for assistance over the weekend. Clare mentioned that in the past Mercy House has helped with garbage pick-up. Perhaps a local group (6th grade Wildwood trip, Hospice, someone?) might be interested in helping pick-up the recycling and keep the proceeds from the bottles and cans.

Mercury Management Act

A recent statewide act regarding fluorescent lamps, electronics with fluorescent components, and toys with button cell batteries mandates that all will have to be recycled at some point in the future (although it's not currently something we have to deal with).

Mass Recycles

There will be a conference in Boston regarding the Mass Recycles campaign. Susan has posters we need to distribute around town and she'll send the poster PDF file to Clare and Meg for further distribution.

Transfer Station Styrofoam Recycling Presentation

The Transfer Station Styrofoam recycling program is going very well. Clare donated totes for holding the Styrofoam until it's brought to businesses which will use it. A large trucking container has been paid for and delivery is awaited for further storage at the Transfer Station.

DPW Rate Increase

The DPW will have to increase its rates for refuse/recycling tonnage because of rising fuel prices. This may equal higher hauler rates for Amherst residents. Household trash costs will increase from \$110/ton to \$125/ton. The variance at the Transfer Station will not increase but for loose trash and construction disposal, prices will increase.

Committee Future Project Planning

We concluded the meeting by discussing potential projects to focus on for the future. Should we prioritize these for the next meeting and come up with other ideas we're interested in?

- Mass Recycles Paper Campaign – we have a packet of ideas we can use from them already.
- Alternative uses for the old landfill – Wind farm? Dog run? Solar panel farm? We need to know what the official assessment of the land was in order to continue with this project.
- Publicize accomplishments of the RRMC.
- Resurrect the town's Styrofoam ban for the food service industry since that's one part that really can't be recycled.
- Partnership with the town and Amherst College for downtown waste/recycling disposal. We don't have a divided truck (which costs \$50,000) – although Amh. College does but could the town come up with some hybrid truck at less cost?

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy McMurrer